ner, telling silly gossip stories when he had a visitor, and occasionally putting his hand in front of his mouth as he laughed the sort of private laugh of an idiot. At Aden he used to go out bareheaded under the hot sun at hours when the sun on one's head is like a blow from a club. At Dakar he lived with a native woman, by whom he had had a child, or at least a miscarriage, 'which is enough to upset" (says Claudel) "the imputations of homosexuality still occasionally attached to his name; for if he had had such tastes (and, it seems, nothing is more difficult to cure), it goes without saying that he would have kept them in that country where they are accepted and facilitated to such an extent that all the officers, without exception, live openly with their boy/*

As I chide him for having, in his study, glossed over the ferocious side of Rimbaud's character, he says he wanted to depict only the Rimbaud of the *Saison en enfer,* in whom the author of *Les Illuminations* was to *result.™* Led, for a moment, to speak of his relations with Verlaine, Claudel, with an absent look, touches a rosary in a bowl on the mantel,

He talks of painting with excess and stupidity. His speech is an unceasing flow that no objection, no interrogation even, stops. Any other opinion than his own has no justification and almost no excuse in his eyes.

The conversation, by a natural slope, reaches matters of religion; he rises up violently against the group of Catholic politicians of the Action Frangaise,[30] then against Sorel and Peguy, whose 'motives he begins to understand better."

In too great a hurry to get back to my book, I cannot note here all the turns of our conversation.

22 November

A few letters this morning painfully remind me that today I am entering my forty-fifth year.

Yesterday, in the late afternoon, after a rather good period of work, I went to Paul Desjardins*; Thierry was there and soon Pierre Hamp arrived. Thierry said nothing during the whole time. Paul Desjardros read us Milton's wonderful sonnet on his blindness, Pierre Hamp began to attack the "tendencies" of the *N.R.F.,* which I defended rather bitterly and at much too great length, losing my footing (or my head) several times, especially after Pierre Hamp alluded to a new attack by Variot in

[29] Rimbaud's two great works are jhe poems in verse and prose of *The lUuminatians* and the prose *Season* m *HeU.*

[so] The Royalist group of I/Action Fraagaise, wiiii its newspaper of the same name, remained militantty Catholic eves after its leader, Charles Maorras, was censured by the Vatican.